

REMARKS

The specification has been reviewed, and clerical errors of the specification including portions as pointed out in the Action have been amended. Also, claims 4 and 5 as pointed out in the Action have been amended.

In paragraph 5 of the Action, claims 1, 2 and 5 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Meyer. In paragraphs 7-10 of the Action, claims 3, 4, 6 and 7 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) by Meyer in view of Ohkawa et al., JP 2002-106519, Morel or Benoit et al.

In view of the rejections, claims 1 and 2 have been amended, and claim 3 has been cancelled. Also, new claims 8 and 9 have been filed.

As clearly recited in claim 1, a connector for fastening a member with an attaching hole comprises a female part, and a male part. The female part includes a head portion, a leg portion connected to the head portion, an inner space formed in the leg portion and opened at the head portion, and an engaging projection formed on an outer surface of the leg portion.

The male part includes a pressing head portion, an inserting leg connected to the pressing head portion to be inserted into the inner space of the female part, a first engaging portion formed on an outer surface of the inserting leg at a forward end thereof for engaging an inner wall of the female part so that the male part is temporarily fixed to the female part at a temporary engaging state, and a second engaging portion formed on the outer surface of the inserting leg at a base end thereof to project outwardly therefrom. When the male part is completely inserted into the female part from the temporary engaging state to a complete engaging state, the second engaging portion is disposed in the inner wall of the female part to permanently fix the connector to the attaching hole.

In the invention, the engaging projection has a first strength to elastically bend inwardly to engage the attaching hole when the leg portion is inserted into the attaching hole. Also, the second engaging portion has a second strength greater than the first strength. Thus, when the male part in the temporary engaging state with the female part is pushed to engage the member, the engaging projection with the first strength is deformed first to engage the member and then the second engaging portion bends and enters the inner space. Namely, in using the connector of the invention, the male part can be pushed in any situation.

In Meyer, a plastic rivet includes a drive pin 12 with protrusions 46, 52, and a body 14 having an elongated portion 18 and slots 32. The plastic rivet may have a predriven state, as shown in Fig. 3, and can be changed to a driven state, as shown in Fig. 4. In this respect, it is held that after elongated portion 18 has been fully inserted into holes 32, shank 40 of drive pin 12 may be driven into passage 28, and the drive pin 12 is driven into body 14 (column 3, lines 55-67).

In the invention, the second strength at the second engaging portion of the male part is greater than the first strength of the engaging projection of the female part. Accordingly, the male part in the temporary engaging state can be pushed into the female part in engaging the connector to the member with the attaching hole. Further, the temporary engaging state can be changed to the complete engaging state by further pushing the male part.

In Mayer, the strengths of the elongated portion 18 and the protrusions 52 are not disclosed, and it is explained that after the elongated portion 18 has been fully inserted into the holes 32, the drive pin 12 is driven into the passage 28. The structure and operation of the invention are not disclosed or discussed in Mayer. Thus, the features of the invention are not disclosed or suggested at all.

In Ohkawa et al., a fastener as shown in Fig. 12 referred to by the Examiner includes female body 1, and a male body 7. The male body 7 includes engagement pieces 11 projecting upwardly from a lower portion, and engagement arms 17 extending downwardly from an upper portion. When a plate A is assembled with the fastener, the engagement pieces 11 project outwardly and the engagement arms 17 are located above receiving sections 18, as shown in Fig. 11. When a plate B is assembled with the plate A, as shown in Fig. 12, the engagement pieces 11 and engagement arms 17 are pushed inwardly, so that the male body 7 can be pushed downwardly. Namely, the engagement pieces 11 and engagement arms 17 are pushed inwardly by the edge of the hole of the plate B. The strengths of the engagement pieces 11 and the engagement arms 17 are not important, so that the strengths thereof are not disclosed. Thus, the features of the invention such that the second strength at the second engaging portion of the male part is greater than the first strength of the engaging projection of the female part are not disclosed or suggested in Ohkawa et al.

In JP '519, hooks 16 formed on a flange 12 engage recesses 6 at a head when an insertion portion is fully inserted. In Morel, when a stem 3 of an upper part A is inserted in a recess 7 of a lower part B, fastening tabs 8 can not be moved inwardly to fasten two elements C, D together. In Benoit et al., as a plunger 30 is inserted into a locking clip engagement 70, tabs 80, 82, 84 are sequentially engaged with a detent notch 86.

In the above references, male portions are pushed into female portions to engage together. However, strengths of engagement portions or tabs formed in these male and female portions are not disclosed. In the invention, the second strength at the second engaging portion of the male part is greater than the first strength of the engaging projection of the female part. As a

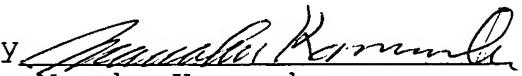
result, the male part can be pushed when engaging the connector with the member and finally inserting into the female part.

As explained above, the features of the invention now clearly recited in claim 1 are not disclosed in any cited references. Even if the cited references are combined, the present invention is not obvious.

Reconsideration and allowance are earnestly solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,

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